

# COLEOPTERISTS NEWSLETTER

(C. W. O'Brien, editor)

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## AUTO-CLEANING OF CAPTURED BEETLES

Many coleopterists use one of two methods for killing captured specimens, namely: (1) dilute alcohol (either ethanol or isopropanol, with or without other additives such as acetic acid and glycerol), (2) ethyl acetate (absorbed on sawdust, cotton wool or plaster). When specimens are collected from certain habitats such as muddy river banks, they may become inadvertently smeared with mud which takes some effort to remove even with access to an ultrasonic cleaner (which is often not an inexpensive piece of equipment).

There is a simple, inexpensive method of obtaining clean specimens. If collecting vials are filled with a solution (ca. 5%) of ordinary household liquid detergent and water, it will be found that after a day's collecting the specimens obtained are not only spotlessly clean but also relaxed and ready for mounting. It is preferable to use screw cap or snap top vials, as corks and neoprene stoppers tend to slip out when coated with the detergent solution. Specimens should be placed briefly in clean water or dilute alcohol to wash off detergent before mounting. If there is insufficient time available to mount the collected specimens the day on which they were captured, then they should be placed for storage in dilute alcohol. Presence of detergent causes rapid drowning of the specimens. The only apparent disadvantage of the method is that the detergent will eventually cause disintegration of specimens left in it, so that it is necessary to remove them following a day's collecting trip. One other advantage is that the aedeagus is quite often everted.

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